Automation in sugar Mills

567. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce new procedure of automation in Indian Sugar Mills;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the energy likely to be saved and the production likely to be increased by adopting the new procedure of automation; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) and (b) There is no proposal at present for introduction of new procedure of automation in Indian Sugar Mills. However, the Government of India has approved a Mission Mode Project on Sugar Production Technologies to be implemented by the Department of Science & Technology with the financial assistance from the Sugar Development Fund operated by the Ministry of Food. Under this Project, to start with 30 sugar factories in different parts of the country will be identified for technological upgradation and to demonstrate to the financially weak units, the techno-economic viability of modernisation, This Project is to be completed in a period of 5 years.

(c) and (d) The technological upgradation in the above sugar factories is likely to help in saving of energy and the production capacity is also likely to be increased by adopting modern technology and equipment. It is not possible at this stage to assess exactly the likely energy saving and production increase on account of the above as it will vary from factory to factory depending upon the equipments installed.

Hike in the issue price of wheat

568. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided for a hike in the Central issue price of wheat; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor and the details of the proposed hike?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) and (b) The Central issue price (ex-FCI godowns) of wheat is revised by the Government from time to time to partially absorb the hike in Minimum Support Price and handling costs of Food Corporation of India. The prevailing Central issue price of wheat is Rs. 402/-per quintal.

Annual destruction of Foodgrains and crops

569. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) what is the estimated annual destruction of foodgrains and crops in the country by field rats; and

(b) what measures have been taken so far to save the foodgrains and crops from being devoured by the field rats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) No precise and reliable estimate on annual destruction of foodgrains and crops in country by field rats is available on all-India basis.

(b) The measures taken by the Government to save the foodgrains and crops from being devoured by the field rats is given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

The measures taken by the Government to save the foodgrains and crops from being devoured by the field rates are:

(a) A high level Central Rodent Control Advisory Board was constituted during 1974 to advise Central and State Governments on the policies to be adopted in orgainising rodent control programmes and to coordinate the efforts on the State Rodent Control Committees.

(b) All the States/Union Territories have set up the State level Rodent Control Committee for coordinating the work at State level.

(c) The Expert Committee under this Board has recommended both short and long term strategy for rodent control.

(d) There is adequate installed/ manufacturing capacity of rodenticides in the country.

(e) For creating awareness on rodent problem and their control in the public, various mass communication media are being used.

(f) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research in consultation with Directorate of Plan Protection, Quarantine & Storage has prepared and recommeded National Plan for Rodent Pest Management with active community participation.

(g) An all India Coordinated Research Project on Rodent Control has been initiated by the ICAR at various Regional Centres throughout the country.

(h) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the Control of Pests and Diseases of Agricultural Importance was in operation since 1970-71 to 1991-92 Rodent was one of the approved pest under this Scheme. The pattern of subsidy under this Scheme was at the rate of 25% Central subsidy on the cost of rodenticides and 33-1/3% operational subsidy as operational charges. From 1992-93 on wards this Scheme was transferred to States on resource transfer basis on the recommendations of the National Development Council (NDC).

(i) Under the "Save Grain Campaign" Scheme, the Ministry of Food at the Centre has been demonstrating proper food storage which include the use of rodent-proof storage structures and use of safe rodenticides.

Sugar Lying at FCI's Burma mines Godown in Jamshedpur

570. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sugar worth Rs. 3 crores lying at the FCI's Burma Mines godown in Jamshedpur has become unfit for consumption due to delay in its distribution;

(b) if so, whether Government have made any inquiry into the matter to fix responsibility for the callousness resulting in huge loss; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) The Food Corporation of India have reported that 1,535 M. Tonnes of sugar have become wet, sweated and sub-standard at FSD Jamshedpur during the course of storage and is not fit for distribution through the Public Distribution System.

(b) and (c) Sugar being a hygroscopic commodity is subject to deterioration due to moisture in the atmosphere, etc. and becomes wet and sweated. Such affected stock would be sold through tenders to bulk consumers, including confectioners.

An enquiry however has been ordered in the matter.